

A VOICE FROM PRISON.

C. I. Kempe, imprisoned in Detroit by the cruel decree of an Arizona Judge, for having married two wives when there was no law against it, expresses his feelings and bears his testimony.

HOUSE OF CORRECTION, DETROIT,
Michigan, June 29, 1885.

*Editor George C. Lambert, Deseret News
Office, Salt Lake City:*

Dear Brother—Your valuable letter has been truly appreciated by me and my brethren here in prison. A friend in need is a friend indeed, and it is almost worth the sacrifice and suffering we are passing through here, to learn we have so many true and noble friends. For my part, language fails me to express my

GRATITUDE

for the kindness of my brethren and sisters in administering to the wants of my suffering family and by kind letters and periodicals and even temporal means alleviating the hardships of prison life; and no less do my brethren and I here feel truly grateful to the many who have been so kind as to have come here in this out-of-the-way place to visit us, and who are laboring faithfully for our deliverance from the cruel injustice we are suffering in this glorious land of liberty (?)

When first I came here it almost made me despair to think of the expense of the court and the consequences to my poor innocent children, whom I had to leave after having struggled by day and night almost incessantly for three years in St. Johns, and through failure of crop, lost ail, and then had to leave part of my family in a new place among strangers, in a house only half finished and entirely unfit for winter use, with the fourth year's crop mostly frozen. Who could, under such circumstances, feel well?

And then to be hauled out of bed at 12 o'clock at night and dragged 315 miles away, and next, without a shadow of justice, to be condemned for a crime of which I was entirely innocent, was rather hard to bear. Even the court record positively showed that the woman I was accused of having married in 1869 had been my wife for 20 years. And after all this I was, like a Russian traitor, sent about 2,000 miles from my home to spend a term of years among convicts; and yet, had it not been for the fear of my family suffering, it would be but a joy to suffer for the Gospel of Christ, for truly our religion is well worth all that human beings can endure. And now, when I realize that through the great kindness of my true friends my family is provided for, I can only rejoice and give thanks to God; and though we cannot here, as our brethren do at Yuma, partake of the Sacrament and mutually edify one another, yet, in our hearts, we can rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for the Gospel's sake.

How well do I remember 28 years ago, when, as a boy, I was surrounded by the luxury of this world, I was young, hopeful, proud, with a feeling of independence, as if the whole world was my own, and yet thoroughly miserable and disgusted with all of my associates, again and again asking myself the

QUESTION:

Is there no longer any such religion as that of the Old Testament? Is chastity dead and buried, and has heaven been shut against us? Have the angels

departed and God hid Himself forever? Is religion nothing more than a trade for hypocrites to earn money by? I read the Bible and heard the ministers, and felt like the hungry man dreaming he was eating, but on waking finding his stomach empty. I was a Christian in name, but received none of the blessings promised a true disciple of Christ, when all at once on one Wednesday evening an unseen messenger called me to follow him and took me to the house of Brother Tietjen, now of Saultquah, and gave me a testimony that can never be erased from my memory; for when, on the following Sunday, I, by invitation, went to Mr. Tietjen's house, I found everything correct, and, when afterward I was baptized, I received the promised blessing, which I could not have received had the administrators not had authority from God. And, when shortly after, I was called to the ministry, I had no need to say, I believe the "Mormons" have a better religion than anyone else, because there was no comparison; I had received the Gospel of Jesus Christ by

REVELATION FROM HEAVEN,

and was called of God to bring the message to my fellow men, and, from that day to this, I am conscious that never in my life have I missed one opportunity to do my duty in this respect, and though in my native country and in Norway I have baptized people by the hundred, not one has ever complained that I made a promise that was not fulfilled. Yet my promises were emphatic and positive that if they would repent from all sin, and earnestly seek God, they should know for themselves that what the world called "Mormonism" was the work of God: that their sick should be healed, and that all the blessings of the Gospel should follow them. Though young and inexperienced and childish as I then was, yet I never rested. At times I had ten meetings in a week, and yet felt a desire to do more, and why? Because

GOD WAS WITH ME.

When I laid my hands upon the sick, they were healed; even blind were made to see, and persons apparently on their deathbeds and after having been given up by physicians as incurable, would leave their beds healthy and joyful when I took my hands off their heads. Now, I ask, was that the power of man? Was that the power of a false religion? Then by what power and authority did Paul do such things? And who among the Saints have not experienced similar things?

I do not write this to boast, for, God being my witness, I feel now entirely unworthy of all the blessings I have thus enjoyed; but I desire to make

ONE MORE APPEAL

to my Scandinavian friends; yea, to all who are willing to once more listen to a voice from prison. Is there more than one God? Is there more than one Gospel? Is there more than one Priesthood? If the answer is No, let me ask, is there anything to be gained in heaven, earth or hell by retreating? Have we one lot of a principle revealed from heaven that we can dispense with? I say, No! No, my brethren and sisters, God must be obeyed at all hazards if we would gain salvation; and while we do so we have nothing to fear. God is at the helm, and though the ship creaks and shivers in every point, the devils will only laugh if we are fools enough to jump into the water and drown.

I thank God for this persecution, though I think I feel it as hard as anyone, for, though my heart is buoyant, I am

LOSING STRENGTH,

and have no idea that I could survive three years' imprisonment in this place.

Our strength is not in numbers but in honesty, chastity, virtue and integrity. The God of Israel is not getting old and decrepit, and though our enemies number billions, He is equal to the emergency; and what is imprisonment, or even death, compared with

eternal life? Where, outside of this Church, can be found such men as President John Taylor, Geo. Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, W. Woodruff, and thousands of others of our brethren, who for honesty, nobility of character and integrity have no superiors living? However, I do not believe the Gospel because of any man or set of men; I believe because I know for myself of its truth. I believe, too, that those who show the white feather and prove recreant to the trust which God has reposed in them, however high the position they may occupy, will go down, and I would not fear to prophecy that such will be the fate of any one that takes that course.

Well, my letter is already too long,

and yet I have not written the one-hundredth part of what I would like to say. I received a letter to-day, but not one word of hope as to my release. My heart is full of

GRATITUDE

to my brethren for their kindness, and especially do I feel to thank Bishop J. P. T. Johnson and Judge Dusenberry, of Provo, and Bishop D. K. Udall, of St. Johns, whose labors have been unceasing both for us and our families, and if I get the privilege to leave this place alive I shall answer all the kind letters I have received.

With kind regards to all the Saints, I remain your Brother in the Gospel,

CHRISTOPHER I. KEMPE.

